



# Understanding the HSC & the ATAR

PPA – May 2016



# WHAT IS THE ROLE OF SCHOOL ASSESSMENT IN THE HSC?

- In Year 12, students sit for a range of different assessment tasks in each subject
- Each task contributes a percentage of the final school assessment mark for the subject
- The school assessment mark makes up 50% of the final HSC mark

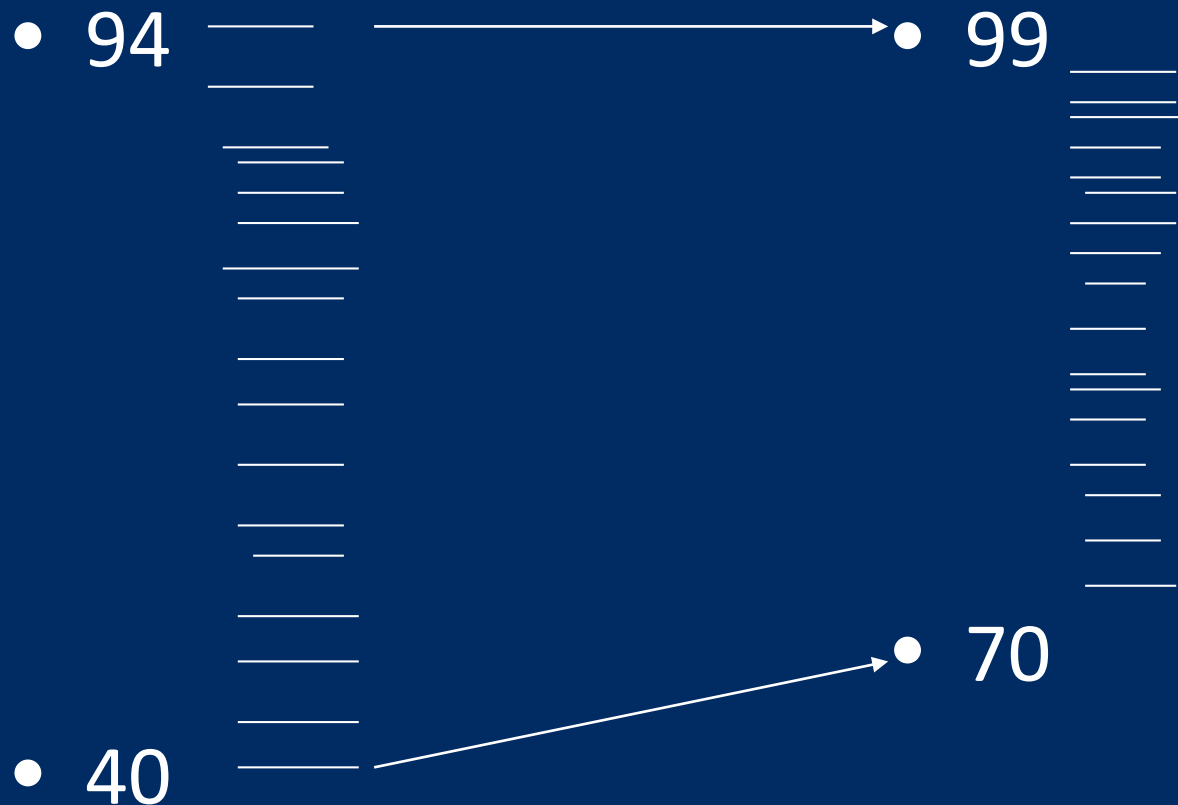
# HOW ARE SCHOOL ASSESSMENT MARKS MODERATED?

- At the end of the HSC assessment program, Pymble submits the assessment mark for each student in each course to the Board of Studies.
- These marks are moderated in each course to match the performance of the same group on the HSC exam.

# HOW ARE THE ASSESSMENTS MODERATED?

- ASSESSMENTS

- HSC Exam



What is the  
relationship  
between the  
School

Assessment Rank  
and the HSC Rank  
order?

- The assessment rank order does not influence the HSC exam rank order
- Each student keeps the mark she earns in the HSC exam



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# Example

School Assessment	Moderated Assessment	Exam Mark	<b>HSC Mark</b>
85	89	84	<b>87</b>
84	88	92	<b>90</b>
84	88	93	<b>91</b>
83	88	88	<b>88</b>
80	86	91	<b>89</b>
80	86	82	<b>84</b>

# THE ATAR

- What is the ATAR?
- How is it calculated?
- The HSC and the ATAR
- Scaling
- Assessment and rankings



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# WHAT IS THE ATAR?

- It is a RANK between 30.00 and 99.95 with increments of 0.05
- It provides a measure of overall academic achievement in the NSW Higher School Certificate
- It ranks students for academic achievement

# WHAT MAKES UP THE ATAR?

- The ATAR is based on an aggregate of **scaled** marks in 10 units of ATAR courses
- The best 2 units of English are counted
- The best 8 units of the remaining subjects are also counted



# HSC MARKS AND THE ATAR

## HSC MARKS

These marks provide information about how well a student achieves in each of the courses she completes

## ATAR

The ATAR provides information about a student's overall performance in relation to other students, and compares students who have completed different course combinations.

# WHAT IS SCALING?

- Raw HSC marks cannot be used to calculate an overall measure of achievement because the criteria used to define standards in each course are different
- Because of the differences between courses, some sort of adjustment must be carried out to produce an overall measure of achievement – this is called **scaling**.



# SCALING

- Courses are scaled using the mean scores and distribution of marks, which indicate the ability of the course candidature

# SCALING

- The rank order of students within a course is not altered by scaling
- However, scaled marks will in many cases be different from the corresponding HSC marks a girl receives





# Examples

<b>Scaled HSC Marks 2014</b>	<b>HSC Mark 95</b>	<b>HSC Mark 90</b>	<b>HSC Mark 80</b>
English (Advanced)	92	82	62
Mathematics	89	81	64
Geography	93	82	56
Business Studies	89	79	56
Chemistry	94	86	69
Biology	93	84	67
Modern History	92	82	61

# Same marks, different ATAR?

## Student A

English	90
Mathematics	90
Chemistry	90
Modern History	90
French	90

**ATAR 96.10**

## Student B

English	90
Geography	90
Food Tech	90
Modern History	90
Biology	90

**ATAR 95.50**



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# Same marks, different ATAR?

## Student A

English	80
Mathematics	80
Chemistry	80
Modern History	80
French	80

**ATAR 81.55**

## Student B

English	80
Geography	80
Food Tech	80
Modern History	80
Biology	80

**ATAR 77.65**

# WARNING!

- Students should never choose a course based on the projected scaling in that course
- If a student does not like a course or is not very good at it, she will not do well, no matter how it is scaled



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# Scenario 1

## HSC marks

English 90

Physics 53

Chemistry 54

German 57

Maths Ext 1 45

Maths Ext 2 40

## Scaled marks

English 87

Physics 38

Chemistry 42

German 43

Maths Ext 1 50

Maths Ext 2 46

**ATAR 66.35**



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# Scenario 2

## HSC marks

English	81
Bus. Studies	89
Food Tech	97
General Maths	94
Modern History	87
Hospitality	96

## Scaled marks

English	71
Bus. Studies	79
Food Tech	88
General Maths	84
Modern History	76
Hospitality	89

**ATAR 96.05**

# Pymble ATAR results 2015

- 3 students earned a perfect 99.95
- 25 students (10%) earned an ATAR of 99 or better
- 75 students (30%) earned an ATAR 95 or better
- 53% of Pymble students earned an ATAR of 90 or more, placing them in the top 10% of the state.



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